MARVEL
BEN REILLY:
THE SCARLET SPIDER®
#2
DAVID BAGLEY
DELL
KEITH
DIRECT EDITION MARVEL.COM

Cloned from a stolen sample of Peter Parker's genetic material, Ben Reilly possesses all of Peter's memories, as well as the powers of The Amazing Spider-Man. Created, not born, and without an identity of his own, he gave himself a new name and made his own way in the world as...

BEN REILLY: THE SCARLET SPIDER

After a misguided turn as a super villain, Ben is looking to get back on his feet. But things haven't been easy for him.

With no resources, he went to Las Vegas and asked for help from the mother of one of his NEW U patients, Cassandra Mercury, a singer and casino magnate.

She was hardly happy to see him...

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I HOPE THIS DOESN'T DISAPPOINT YOU, CASS, BUT THIS ISN'T THE FIRST TIME I'VE HAD A GUN POINTED AT ME.
I'M SURE IT'S NOT. BUT YOU KNOW WHAT IT IS?
WHAT?
THE LAST TIME.
BLAAAM

NICE SHOT.
HOW DID YOU--?!
PEOPLE ARE ALWAYS AIMING GUNS AT ME. IT NEVER WORKS OUT WELL FOR THEM.
NOW... WE NEED TO HAVE A TALK.
BIG GUY: I KNOW BETTER THAN TO TRY AND SHOOT YOU. YOU HAVE THE WHOLE "BULLETS BOUNCE OFF ME" THING GOING FOR YOU.
BUT *SHE* DOESN'T. SO IF YOU WANT ME TO VENTILATE HER, BY ALL MEANS, KEEP MOVING.
THERRRRRE WE GO.
NOW...LET'S ALL TALK LIKE GROWN-UPS.

FIRST THINGS FIRST: YOU SAID ABIGAIL WAS DEAD.
CROOKS' DISEASE MAY BE FATAL, BUT IT ISN'T FATAL THAT FAST. SHE SHOULDN'T HAVE PASSED YET.
WHY DID YOU LIE?

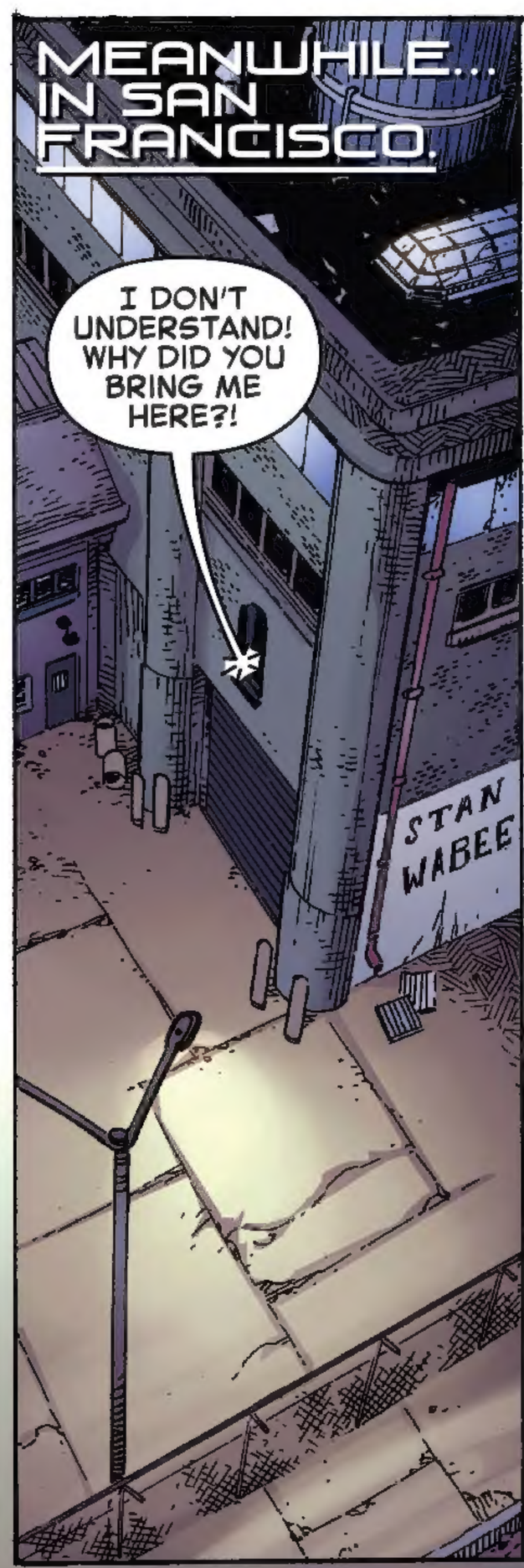
SHE'S NOT DEAD, BUT SHE MIGHT AS WELL BE. SHE'S LAPSED INTO A COMA AND THE DOCTORS SAY SHE WON'T RECOVER.
IS SHE IN A HOSPITAL?
THEY CAN'T DO ANYTHING FOR HER. SHE'S HERE.
TAKE ME TO HER.
WHY?

BECAUSE I SAID PLEASE.
NO, YOU DIDN'T.
FINE. PLEASE.
GIVE ME BACK THE GUN.

SURE. NO PROBLEM.

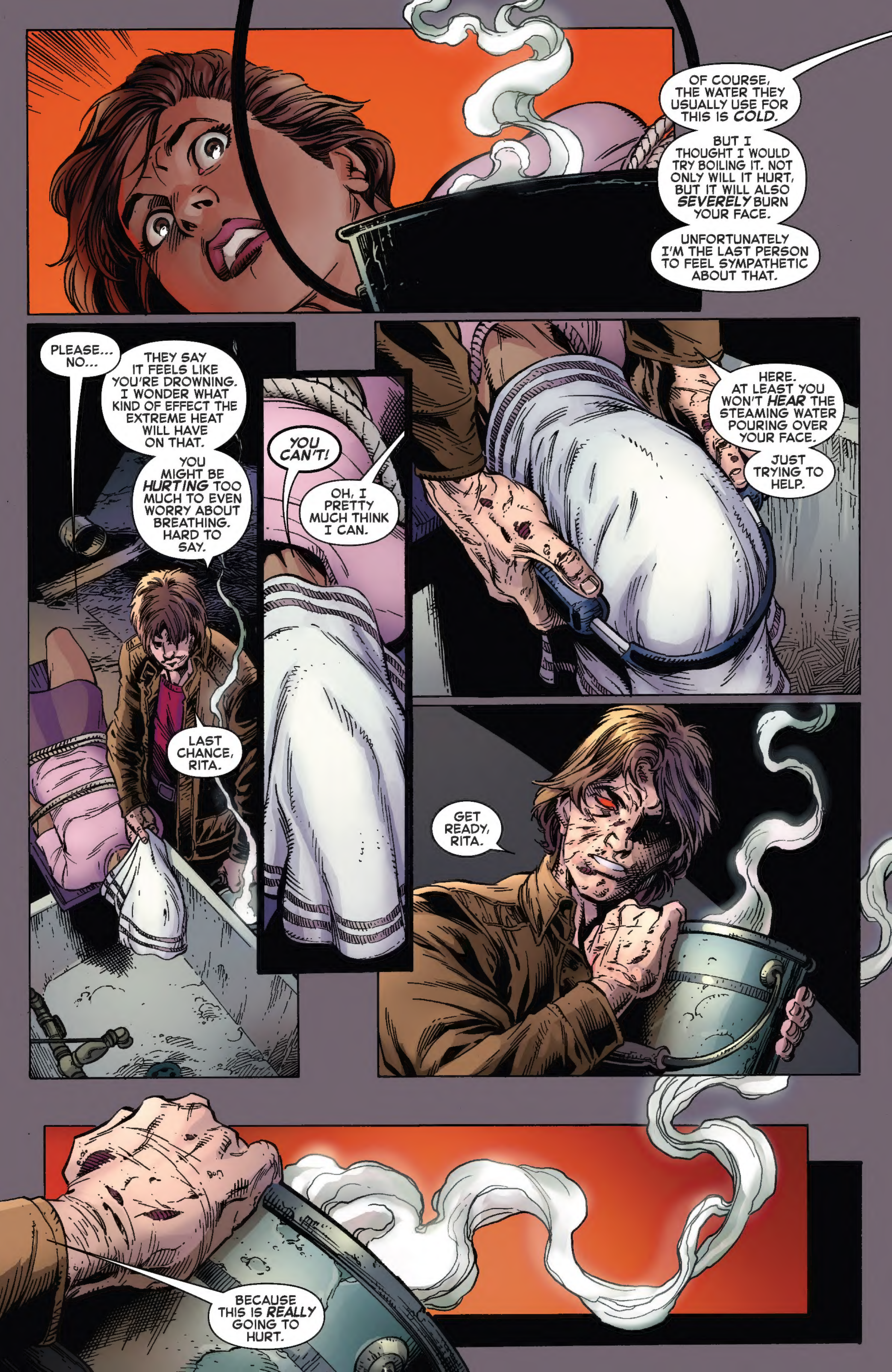
KRUNK

HERE YOU GO.

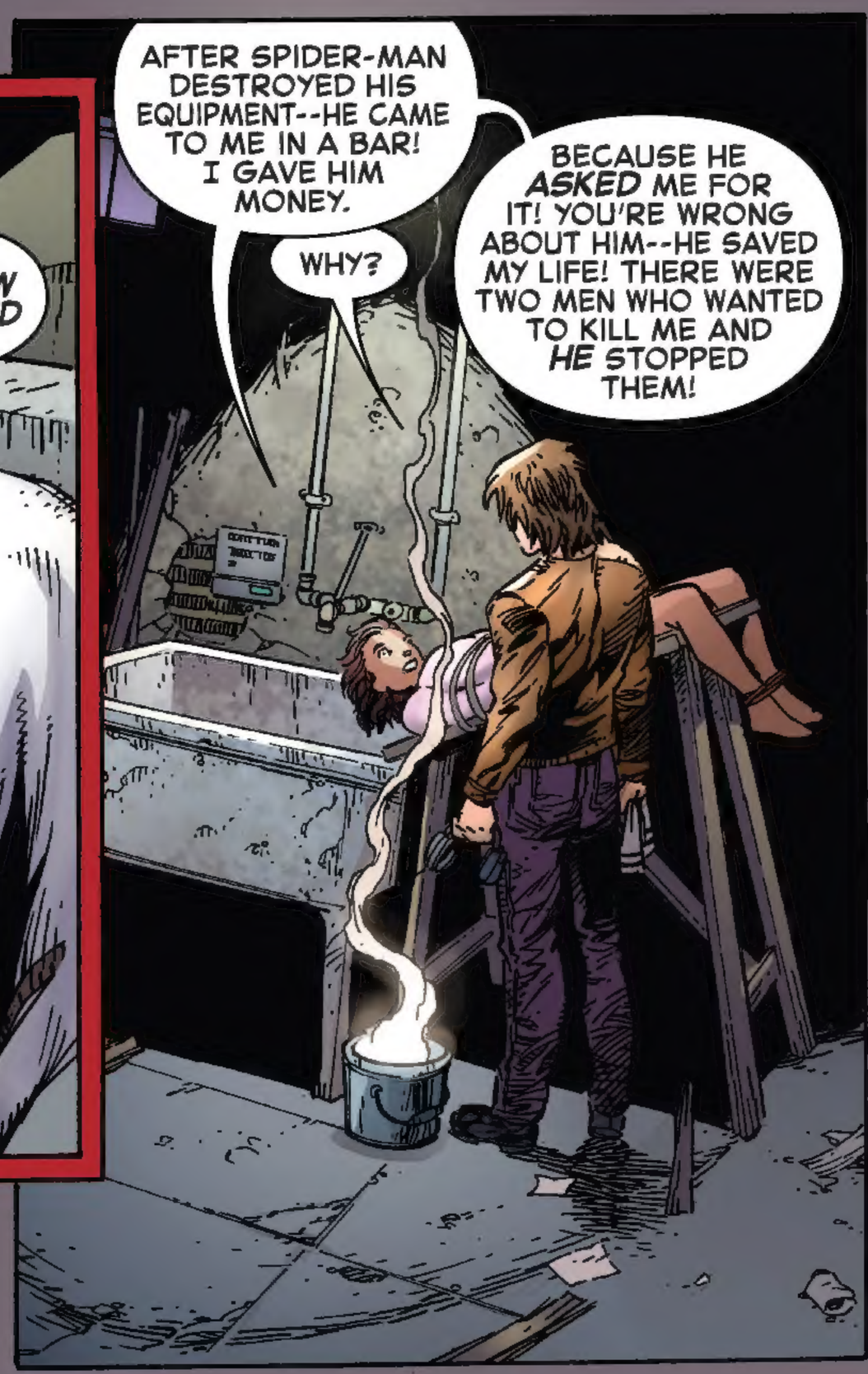

MEANWHILE... IN SAN FRANCISCO.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND! WHY DID YOU BRING ME HERE?!
STAN WABEE

BECAUSE YOU *LIED* TO ME. YOU SAID THE JACKAL DIDN'T TELL YOU WHERE HE WENT.
HE DIDN'T!
YEAH, SEE, HERE'S THE PROBLEM.
YOU'RE THE ONLY FRIEND HE HAD IN THIS TOWN, RITA.
EVERYONE ELSE THE COPS SNATCHED UP ROLLED ON HIM. BUT NOT *YOU*.
I'D LIKE TO KNOW *WHY*.
AND IF YOU WON'T TELL THE TRUTH, WELL...

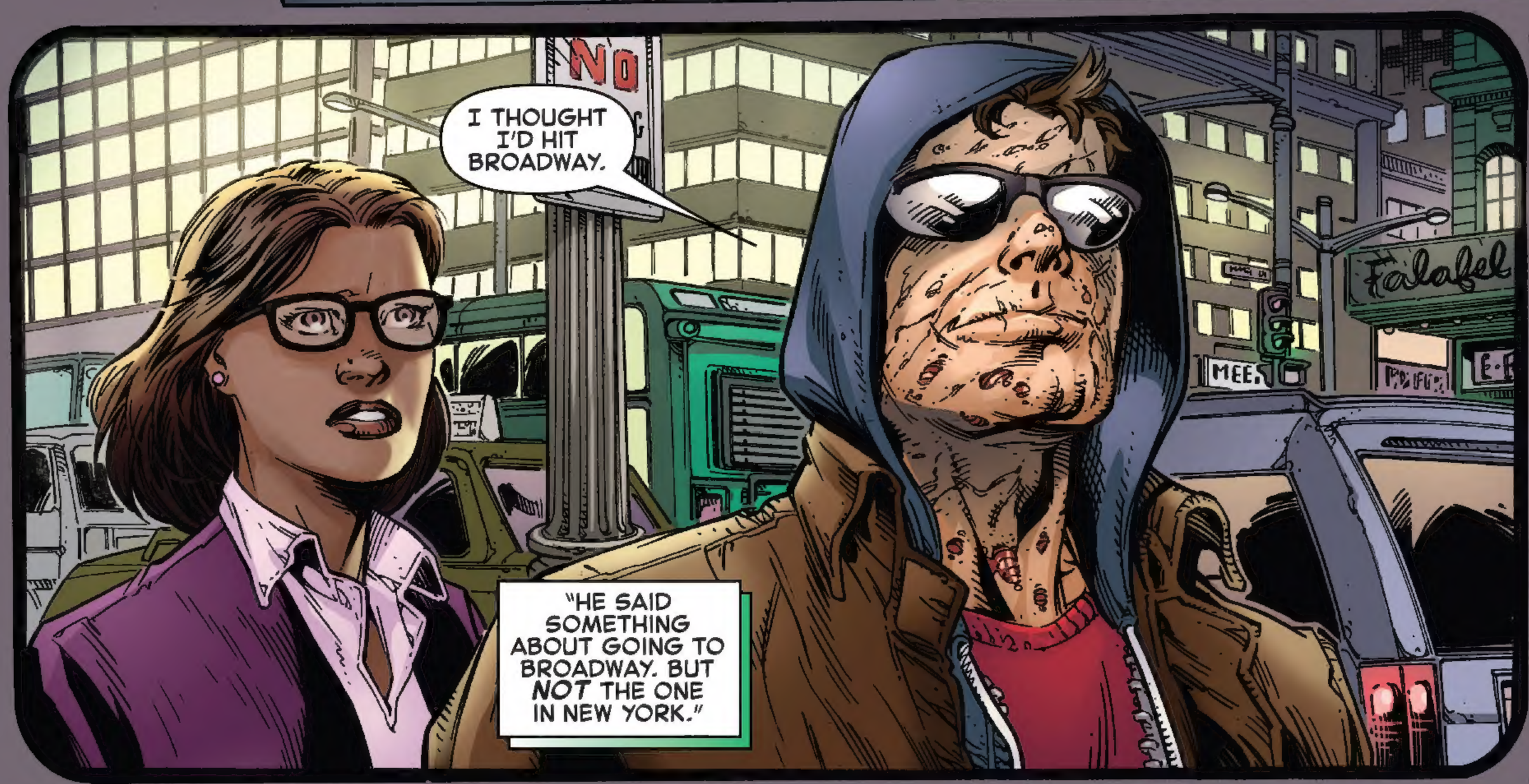
...I'LL JUST HAVE TO FIND A WAY TO *FORCE* YOU.
YOU'RE... YOU'RE GOING TO TORTURE ME?!
OF COURSE NOT.
IT'S CALLED "*ENHANCED INTERROGATION*" NOW.


OF COURSE, THE WATER THEY USUALLY USE FOR THIS IS COLD.
BUT I THOUGHT I WOULD TRY BOILING IT. NOT ONLY WILL IT HURT, BUT IT WILL ALSO SEVERELY BURN YOUR FACE.
UNFORTUNATELY I'M THE LAST PERSON TO FEEL SYMPATHETIC ABOUT THAT.
PLEASE... NO...
THEY SAY IT FEELS LIKE YOU'RE DROWNING. I WONDER WHAT KIND OF EFFECT THE EXTREME HEAT WILL HAVE ON THAT.
YOU MIGHT BE HURTING TOO MUCH TO EVEN WORRY ABOUT BREATHING. HARD TO SAY.
LAST CHANCE, RITA.
YOU CAN'T!
OH, I PRETTY MUCH THINK I CAN.
HERE. AT LEAST YOU WON'T HEAR THE STEAMING WATER POURING OVER YOUR FACE.
JUST TRYING TO HELP.
GET READY, RITA.
BECAUSE THIS IS REALLY GOING TO HURT.

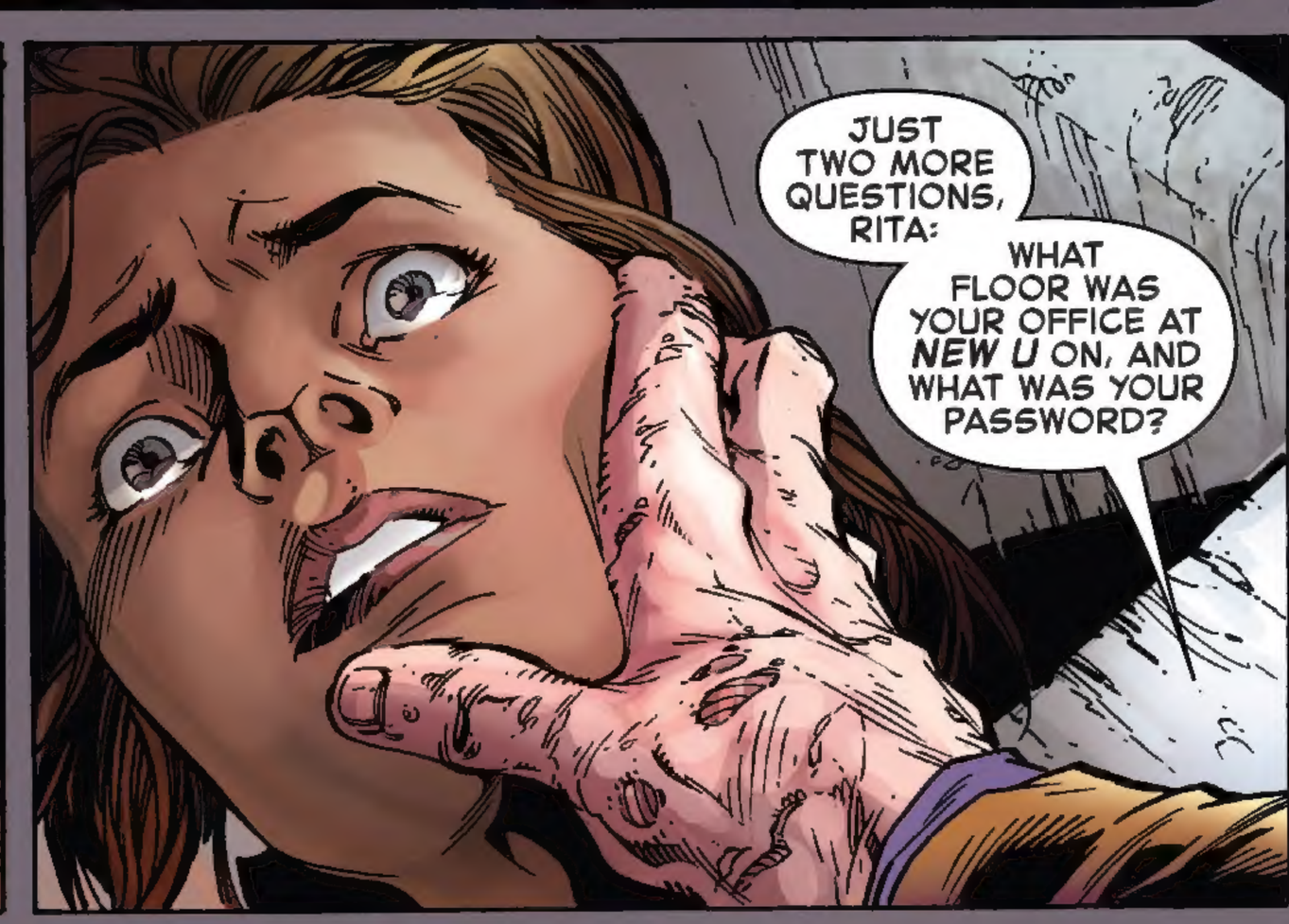
WAIT!
OKAY! OKAY! I SAW HIM! I HELPED HIM!


AFTER SPIDER-MAN DESTROYED HIS EQUIPMENT--HE CAME TO ME IN A BAR! I GAVE HIM MONEY.
WHY?
BECAUSE HE ASKED ME FOR IT! YOU'RE WRONG ABOUT HIM--HE SAVED MY LIFE! THERE WERE TWO MEN WHO WANTED TO KILL ME AND HE STOPPED THEM!

AT THE BAR?
YES!
THEY JUST HAPPENED TO SHOW UP A FEW MINUTES AFTER HE DID?
RITA. HE PROBABLY ARRANGED THAT. HE SET YOU UP.
YOU'RE WRONG. HE'D NEVER DO THAT!
YES. HE WOULD.
WHAT ELSE DID HE SAY?


I THOUGHT I'D HIT BROADWAY.
"HE SAID SOMETHING ABOUT GOING TO BROADWAY. BUT NOT THE ONE IN NEW YORK."
Falafel

HE'S ON THE RUN.


JUST TWO MORE QUESTIONS, RITA:
WHAT FLOOR WAS YOUR OFFICE AT NEW U ON, AND WHAT WAS YOUR PASSWORD?

WHY DO YOU WANT TO KNOW THAT?
THAT'S MY BUSINESS. ANSWER MY QUESTIONS, RITA. BECAUSE OTHERWISE WE CAN JUST--
NINTH FLOOR. NORTHWEST CORNER.
MY PASSWORD WAS "ARISTOTLE."
ARISTOTLE?
HE WAS THE FIRST BIOLOGIST. HE CLASSIFIED ALL LIVING THINGS.
I KNOW WHO ARISTOTLE IS.
WELL, YOU DON'T KNOW BEN!
TOLD YOU HIS NAME, HUH?
HE WOULD NEVER USE ME THE WAY YOU DESCRIBED!
HE'S A BAD MAN. REGARDLESS OF THE LIVES YOU SAVED TOGETHER.
YOU WERE GOING TO DUMP BOILING WATER ON MY FACE! YOU DON'T GET TO ACCUSE ANYONE ELSE OF BEING A BAD MAN!
THAT WOULD SEEM TO BE A VALID OBSERVATION.
THERE'S... WHAT?
YOU...YOU SAID THERE WAS BOILING WATER...
NEVER HEARD OF DRY ICE? AND YOU CALL YOURSELF A SCIENTIST.
I'LL BE BACK TO FREE YOU AFTER I PAY YOUR OFFICE A VISIT, RITA. LET'S JUST HOPE YOU DIDN'T LIE TO ME...
...OR IT WON'T GO WELL.

LAS VEGAS.

ALL RIGHT, SO THIS IS GOING WELL.

AT LEAST I FOUGHT MY FIRST IMPULSE TO JUST RIP THIS LADY'S ARM OFF HER SHOULDER RATHER THAN SIMPLY DODGING THAT BULLET.

OTHERWISE, WE'D BE DEALING WITH HER ON THE GROUND AND BLOOD EVERYWHERE. WHO NEEDS THAT?

THAT ISN'T TO SAY THIS STILL WON'T TURN INTO A MAJOR SLUGFEST.

WONDER WHAT THIS GUY'S DEAL IS?

SO WHAT'S YOUR DEAL?

COOL.

YEAH, THAT WORKED.

DING

AFTER YOU, PETER.

WH--?

OH. RIGHT. TOLD HER MY NAME WAS PETER.

I CRACK MYSELF UP SOMETIMES.

YOU KNOW, I'D LOVE TO TAKE ALL THE PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE IN GOD AND ASK THEM WHY AN ALMIGHTY BEING WOULD DO THIS TO A CHILD.

I KNOW THEY'LL GIVE ALL THE USUAL ANSWERS. THERE'S A PLAN. THERE'S A REASON FOR EVERYTHING. IT'S GOD'S WILL.

EXCEPT I KNOW THERE'S NOT. I'VE DIED A COUPLE DOZEN TIMES AND THERE WAS ONLY EVER BLACKNESS AND NOTHINGNESS.

I SOMEHOW DOUBT, THOUGH, THAT SHARING MY INSIGHT INTO THE SITUATION WOULD HELP MATTERS.

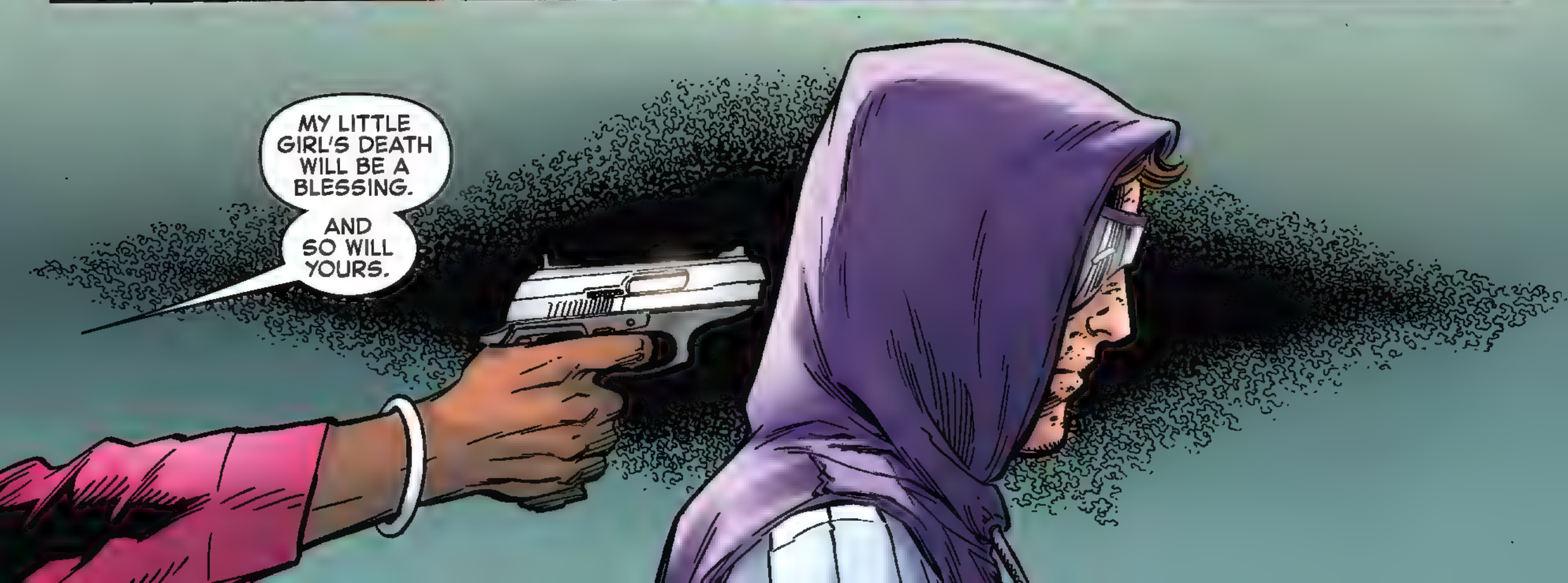
WHAT? NOTHING TO SAY? OR ARE YOU ADMIRING YOUR *HANDIWORK?*

I WANTED MY LITTLE GIRL BACK AND YOU PROMISED THAT YOUR COMPANY COULD DO IT.
AND INSTEAD YOU SUBSTITUTED SOME...SOME CREATURE. SOME COPY OF HER.

I WAS SINGING GOOD NIGHT TO HER WHEN SHE COLLAPSED.
I HELD MY LITTLE GIRL IN MY ARMS AS HER SKIN AND BONES DISSOLVED.
IMAGINE MY SURPRISE WHEN THE POLICE BROUGHT HER BACK TO ME. LIKE THIS. FROM SAN FRANCISCO OF ALL PLACES.

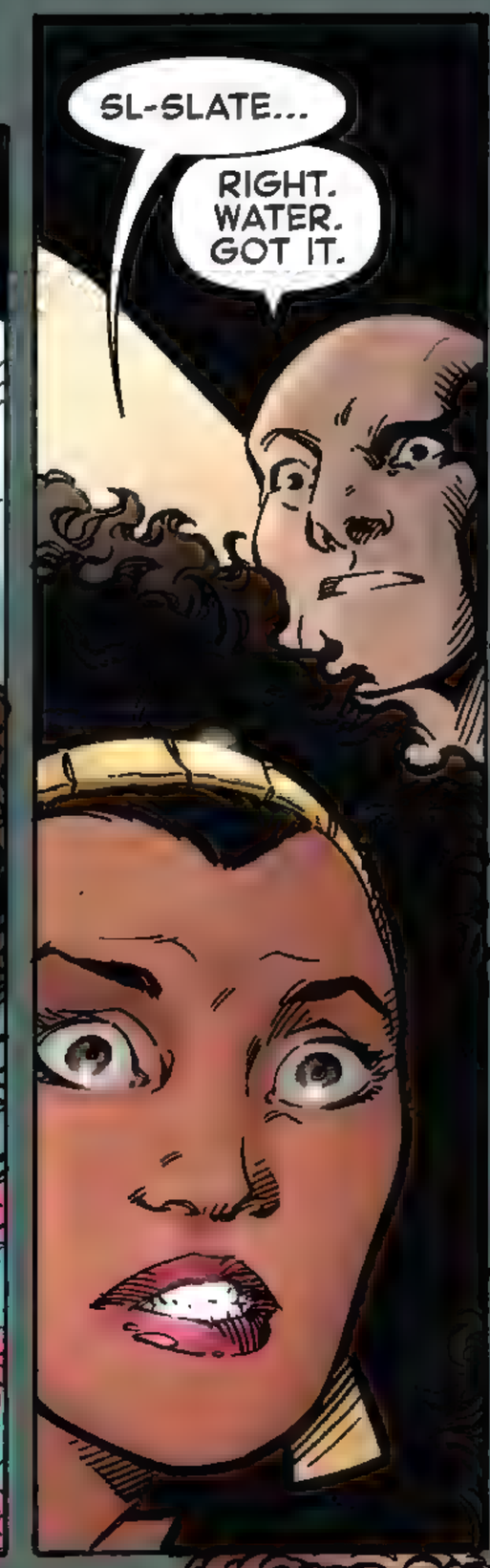
I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT WAS TO YOU. IF IT WAS A JOKE OR A SCAM.
WHAT I DO KNOW IS THAT THE DOCTORS ARE TELLING ME THE SAME THING THEY DID AFTER SHE WAS DIAGNOSED.
MY LITTLE ABBY WILL NEVER WAKE UP AGAIN.

SHE IS JUST GOING TO LIE HERE UNTIL HER BODY GIVES OUT. THAT'S ALL I HAVE TO LOOK FORWARD TO.


MY LITTLE GIRL'S DEATH WILL BE A BLESSING.
AND SO WILL YOURS.

Mommy...?

Can I have some water?


SL-SLATE...
RIGHT. WATER. GOT IT.

HEY, HONEY. HOW ARE YOU FEELING?
I'M TIRED.
THAT'S... THAT'S UNDERSTANDABLE. BUT YOU'RE AWAKE, AND THAT'S... GOOD. THAT'S *VERY* GOOD.

IF IT'S GOOD WHY ARE YOU CRYING?
BECAUSE I'M HAPPY.
I THOUGHT YOU ONLY CRY IF YOU'RE SAD.
SOMETIMES YOU CRY WHEN YOU'RE HAPPY, TOO.
THANK YOU, SLATE. TAKE PETER OUTSIDE, PLEASE.
RIGHT, DIVA.

UNFFFF!
WHAT DID YOU DO?
YOU WANNA GO?
FINE. LET'S GO.
HIS SKIN IS BULLET-PROOF...
WAA
AAP
...BUT I'M BETTING HIS EARS AREN'T! A NICE CRACK ON EITHER SIDE OF HIS SKULL SHOULD--
--DOOOO NOTHING, APPARENTLY.
HM.
THAT WAS ANNOYING.
WAAM
OOOOFFF!
HE HITS TWICE AS HARD AS SPIDER-MAN! CAN'T BREATHE--

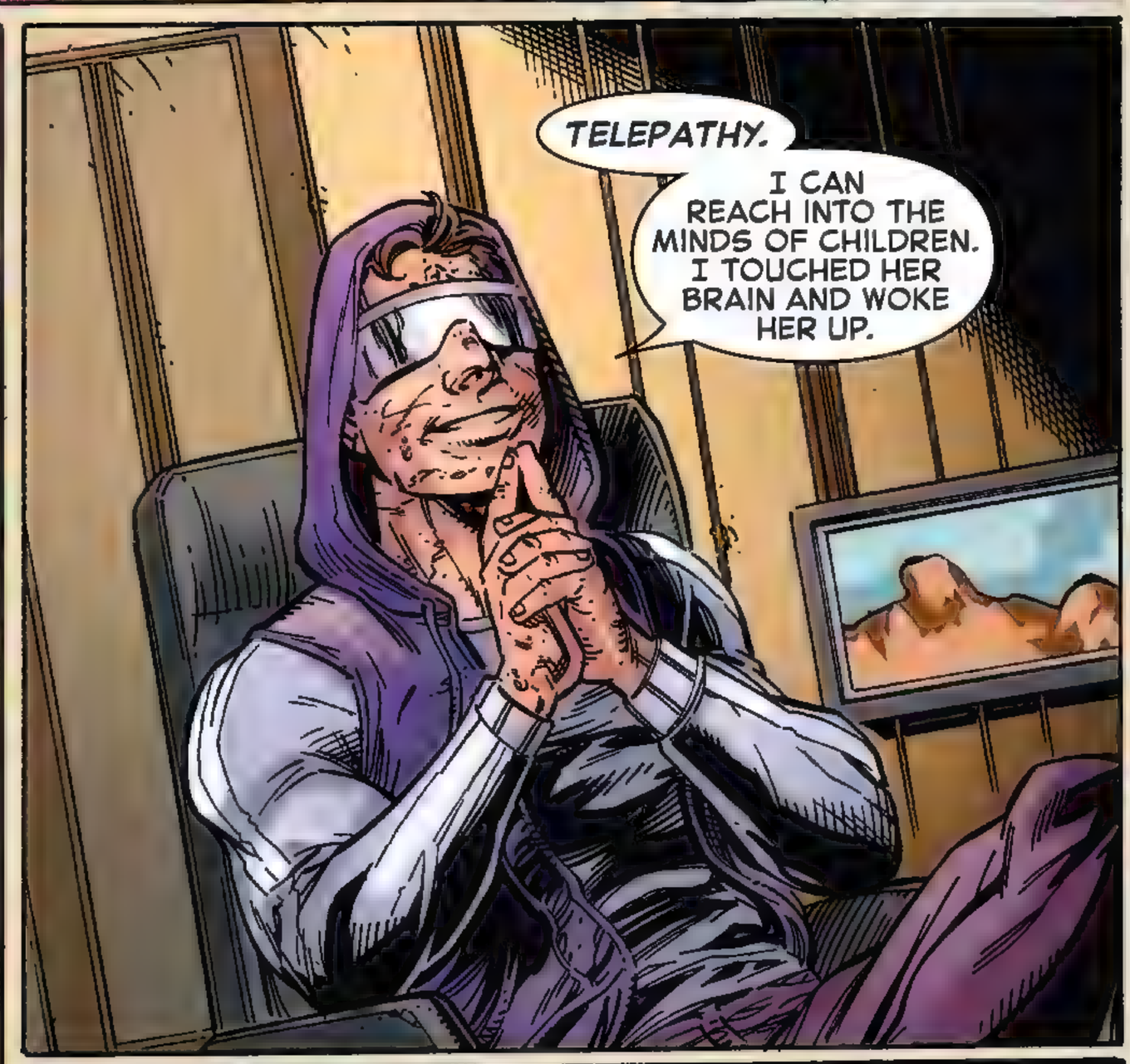
WUUUNK
UNHH!
PUNT!
HE'S FAST TOO...
...WORLD'S SPINNING...
NOW HOW ABOUT YOU ANSWER MY QUESTION...
...OR I JUST BLOW YOUR BRAINS OUT THE BACK OF YOUR--
I HAVE A BETTER IDEA.
UNLESS YOUR BRAINS ARE ALSO BULLETPROOF, WHICH I'M BETTING THEY'RE NOT...
...HOW ABOUT WE PUT DOWN OUR GUNS AND STOP FIGHTING? LET'S BE SMILING WHEN CASSANDRA COMES OUT, SO AS NOT TO RUIN HER DAY.

EVERYTHING OKAY OUT HERE?

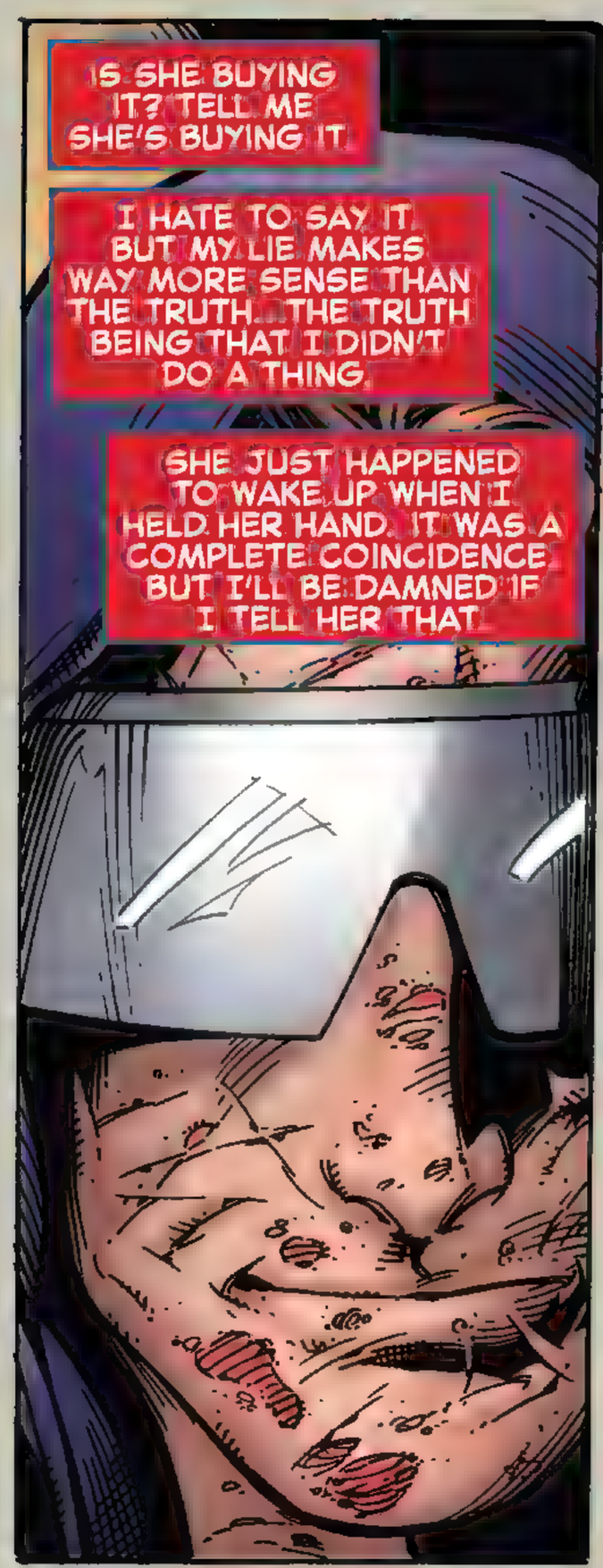
YEAH.
GREAT.
COULDN'T BE BETTER.

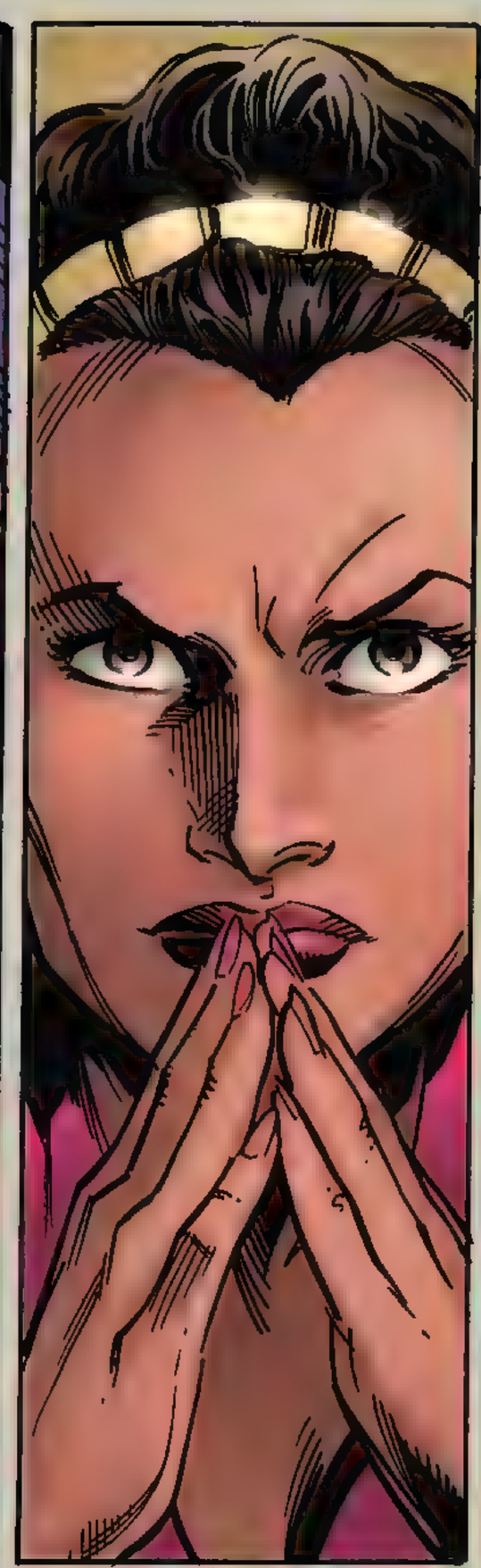
KURT, SHE'S AWAKE. ALERT DOCTOR RYDER IMMEDIATELY.
YES, MA'AM.
PETER, COME WITH ME.

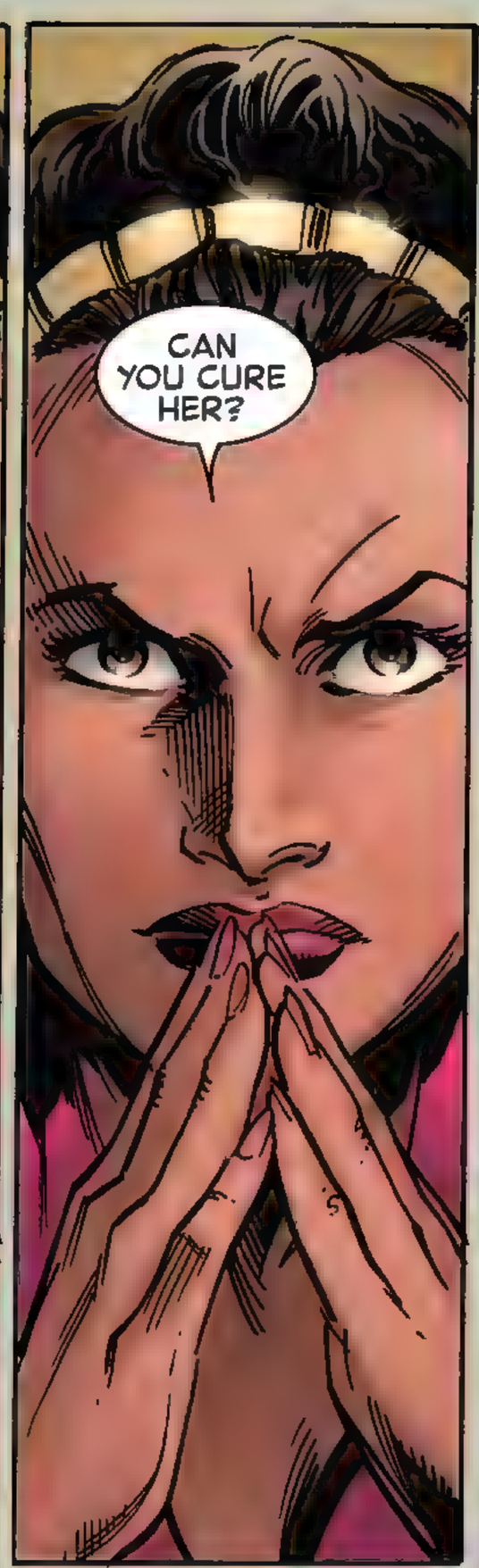
SO. HOW DID YOU DO IT?
YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE ME IF I TOLD YOU.
WHY DON'T YOU *TELL* ME AND LET ME BE THE JUDGE OF THAT.


TELEPATHY.
I CAN REACH INTO THE MINDS OF CHILDREN. I TOUCHED HER BRAIN AND WOKE HER UP.

THAT'S RIDICULOUS.
DIVA, THIS IS--
QUIET, SLATE.


IS SHE BUYING IT? TELL ME SHE'S BUYING IT.
I HATE TO SAY IT, BUT MY LIE MAKES WAY MORE SENSE THAN THE TRUTH... THE TRUTH BEING THAT I DIDN'T DO A THING.
SHE JUST HAPPENED TO WAKE UP WHEN I HELD HER HAND. IT WAS A COMPLETE COINCIDENCE BUT I'LL BE DAMNED IF I TELL HER THAT.




CAN YOU CURE HER?

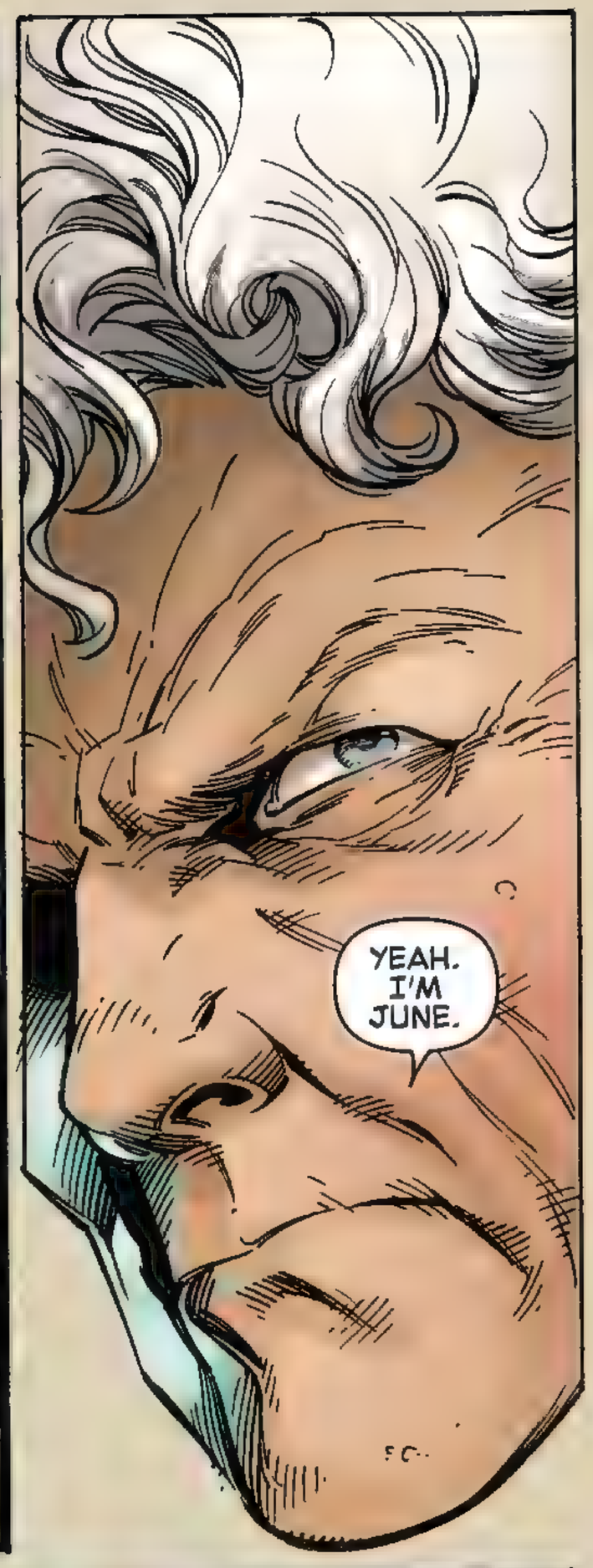
NO. CROOKS DISEASE IS INCURABLE.
ABSOLUTELY.
HOW?
NO CLUE.
RESEARCH. RESEARCH... AND SOME NEW EQUIPMENT.

EQUIPMENT?
MONEY, FOR STARTERS. GUY'S GOTTA EAT.
PLUS A FEW OTHER THINGS.
LIKE WHAT?

MA'AM, YOU CAN'T KEEP SITTING IN FRONT OF THIS SLOT MACHINE.
SHUT UP. GO AWAY.
YOU DON'T HAVE ANY MORE QUARTERS.
I'LL GET SOME.
MA'AM, WE'RE GETTING COMPLAINTS ABOUT Y--
LET GO! SHUT UP!
MA'AM, PLEASE DON'T MAKE THIS--
AARRRHH!
YOU OKAY?
JEEZ! WHAT IF SHE HAS RABIES?
YOU CRAZY OLD BAT! WE'LL CALL THE COPS AND THEY CAN HAUL YOU OUT OF--
OKAY, BOYS. I'LL HANDLE IT FROM HERE.

I SAID TAKE OFF. I HAVE THIS UNDER CONTROL.
GET THAT HAND TAKEN CARE OF.
YES, SIR, MR. SLATE.

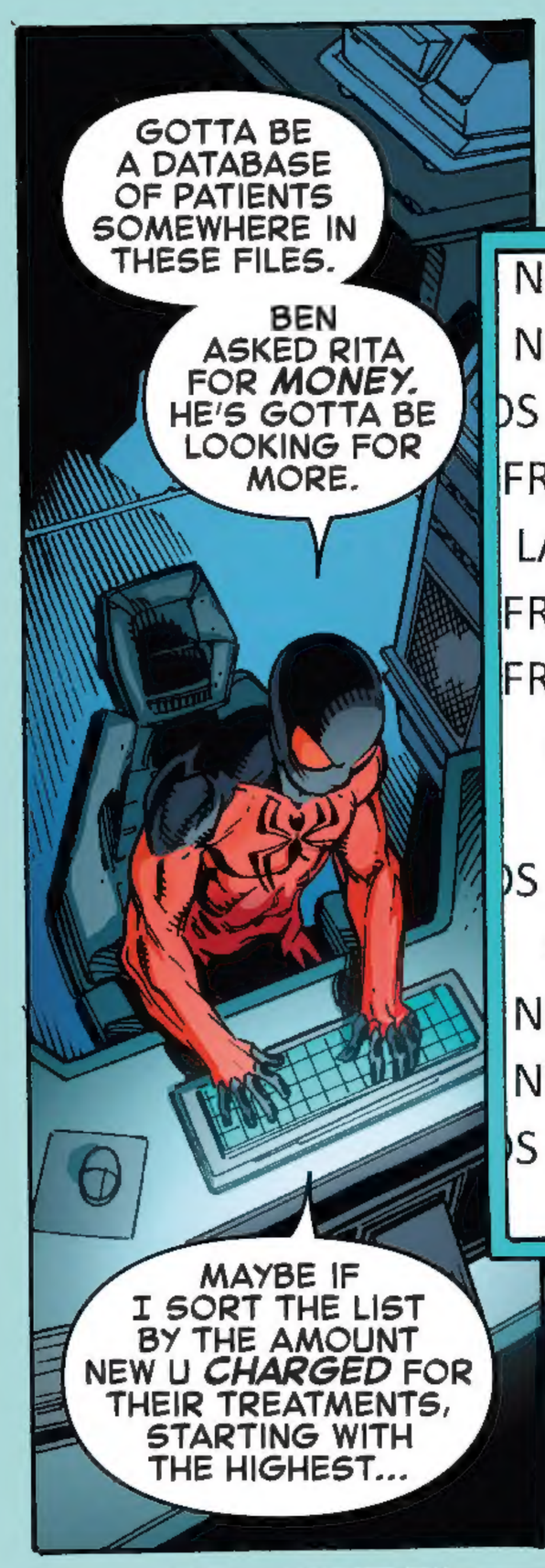
YOU'RE JUNE, RIGHT?
LOOK AT ME, MA'AM.
I SAID LOOK AT ME, OR I'LL RIP YOUR HEAD OFF AND NO ONE AROUND HERE WILL CARE.


YEAH. I'M JUNE.

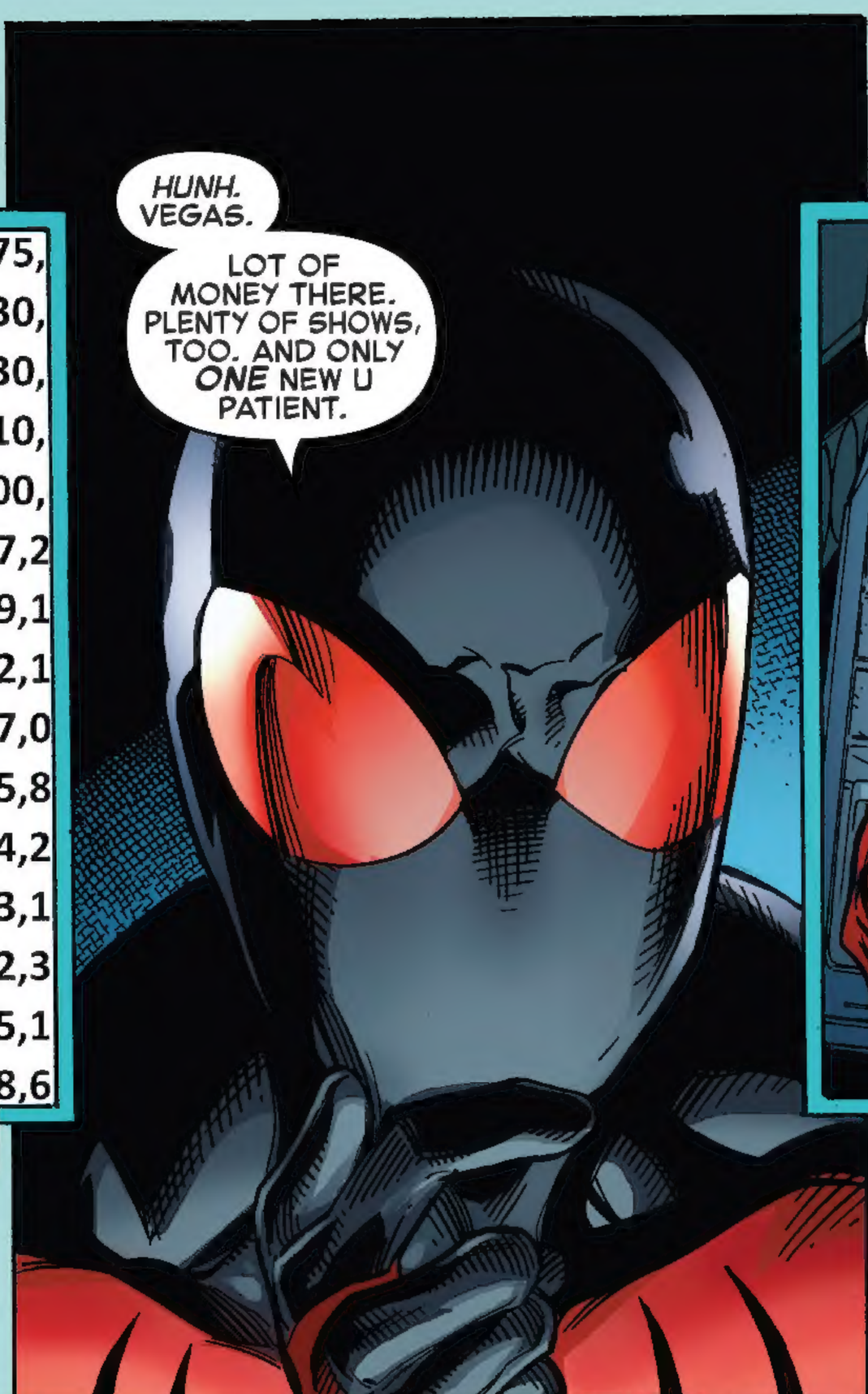
HERE.
IF YOU RUN OUT, GO TO THE CASHIER AND IDENTIFY YOURSELF. YOU'LL GET MORE.

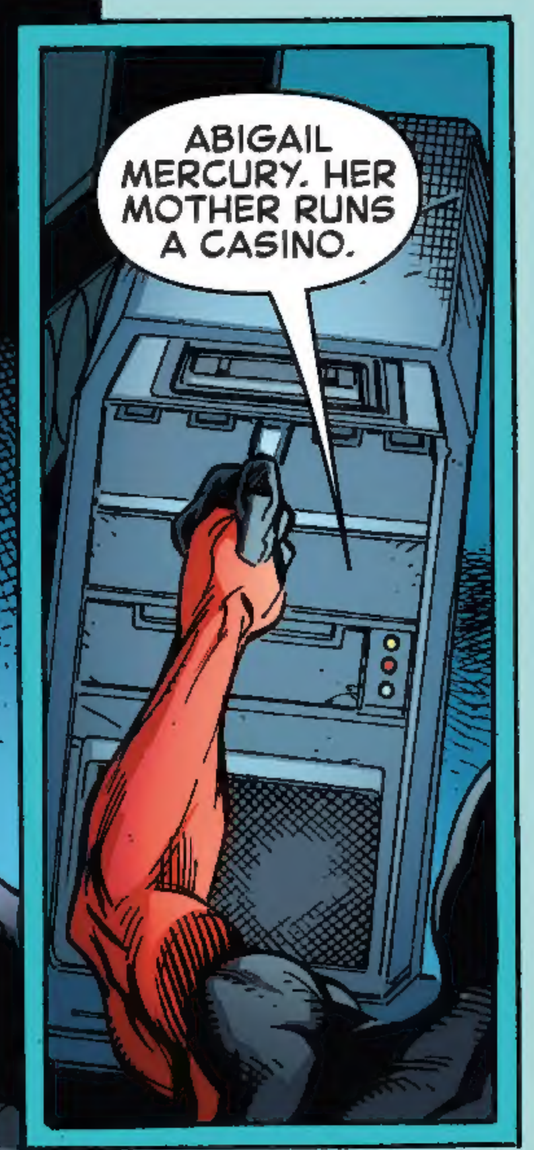
WHAT'S THIS?
YOUR ROOM KEY. ROOM 1100.
YOU'RE LIVING THERE NOW. ANY EXPENSES, CHARGE IT TO THE ROOM.
WHY?
YOUR NEPHEW.
25 CENTS
FINE. WHATEVER.

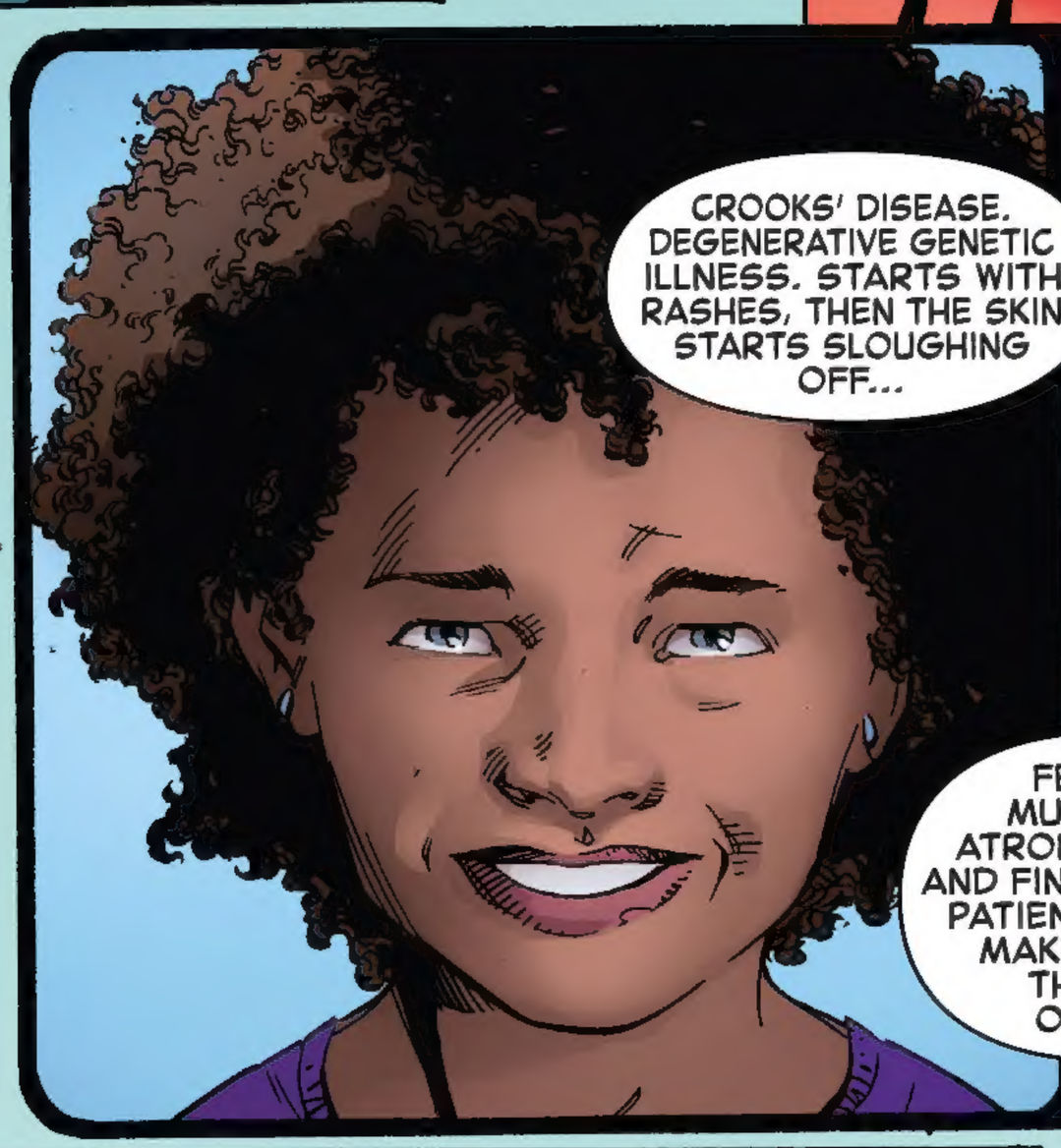
WOULD BE NICE TO HAVE *HUMMINGBIRD'S* HELP GETTING UP TO THE NINTH FLOOR, BUT BEN'S TOO DANGEROUS TO RISK GETTING HER INVOLVED.
SEVEN... EIGHT...
NINE.
KRAAASH
HOPE NOBODY HEARD THAT.
THEN AGAIN, IT'S ONE IN THE MORNING, SO THERE SHOULDN'T BE ANYONE AROUND.
GOTTA MOVE QUICK. COPS DON'T USUALLY LIKE MASKED VIGILANTES WALKING AROUND THEIR *CRIME SCENES.*
GET IN, GET OUT.
DR RITA JOHNSON
BINGO.

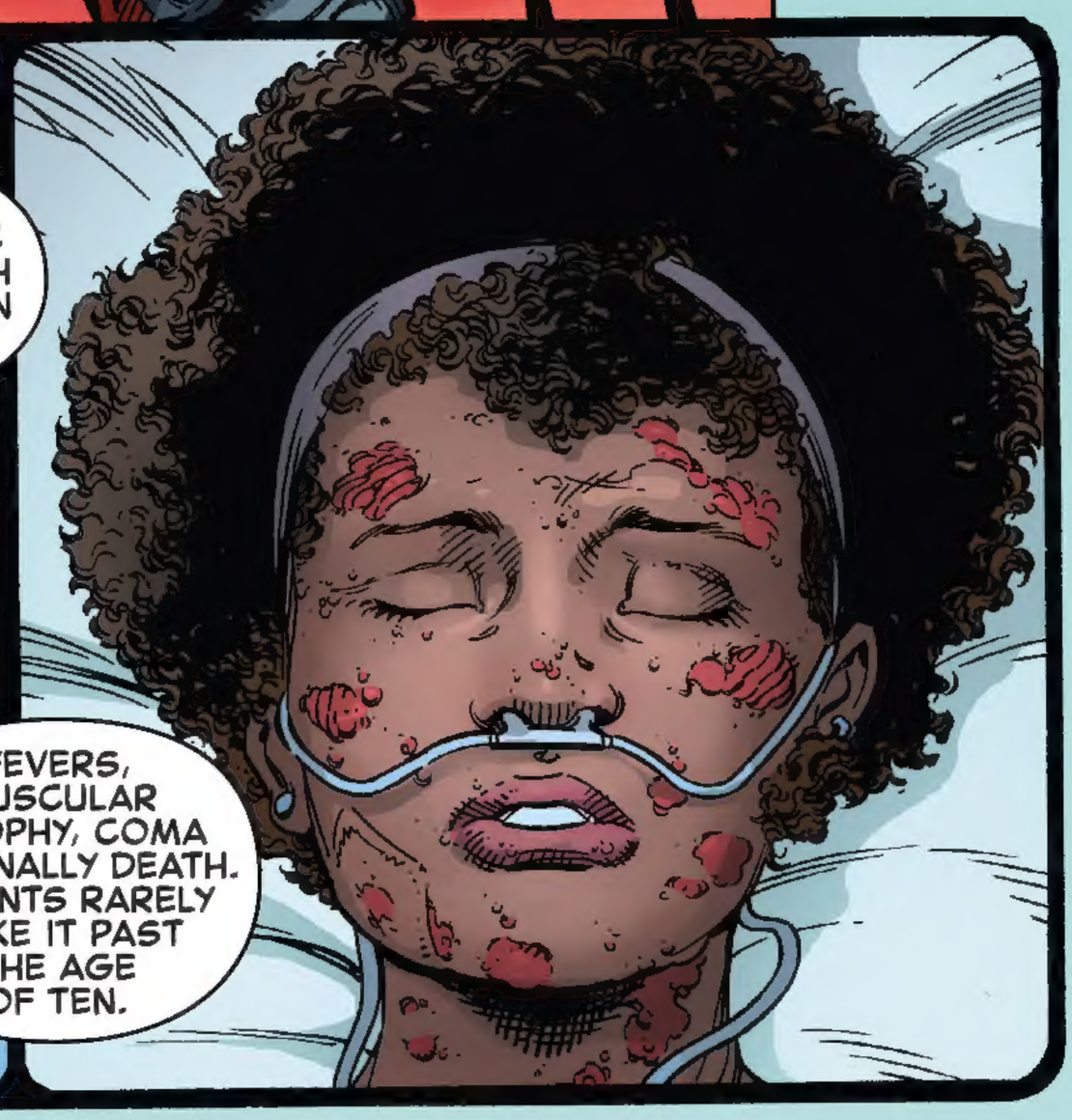

GOTTA BE A DATABASE OF PATIENTS SOMEWHERE IN THESE FILES.
BEN ASKED RITA FOR *MONEY*. HE'S GOTTA BE LOOKING FOR MORE.
MAYBE IF I SORT THE LIST BY THE AMOUNT NEW U *CHARGED* FOR THEIR TREATMENTS, STARTING WITH THE HIGHEST...

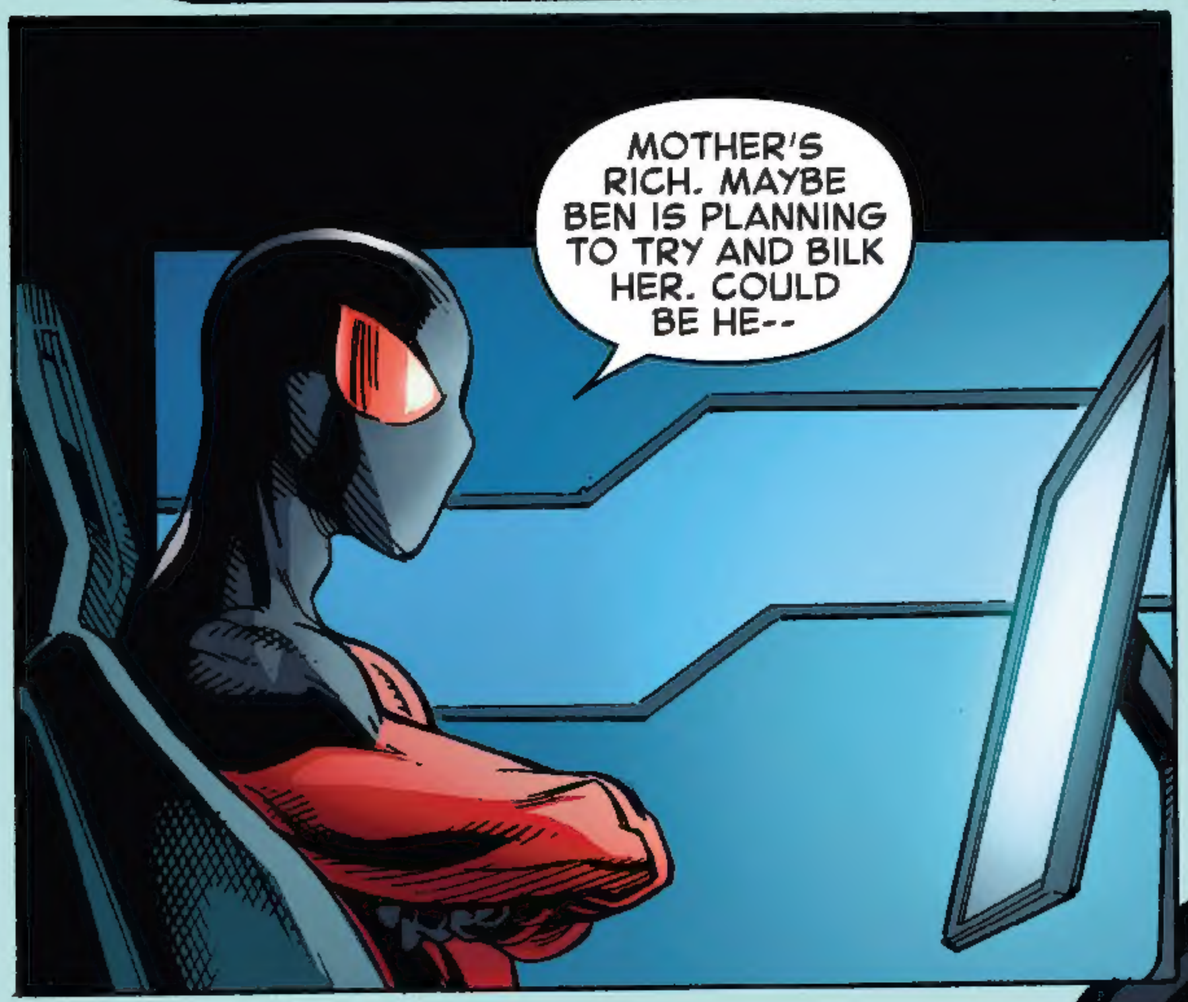
NEW YORK $1,175,
NEW YORK $1,030,
S ANGELES $1,030,
FRANCISCO $1,010,
LAS VEGAS $1,000,
FRANCISCO $947,2
FRANCISCO $929,1
CHICAGO $902,1
BOSTON $897,0
S ANGELES $895,8
CHICAGO $864,2
NEW YORK $843,1
NEW YORK $842,3
S AN 835,1
8,6
CLARKSON SAID BEN WAS GOING TO BROADWAY, BUT NOT THE ONE IN NEW YORK.


HUNH. VEGAS.
LOT OF MONEY THERE. PLENTY OF SHOWS, TOO. AND ONLY *ONE* NEW U PATIENT.


ABIGAIL MERCURY. HER MOTHER RUNS A CASINO.


CROOKS' DISEASE. DEGENERATIVE GENETIC ILLNESS. STARTS WITH RASHES, THEN THE SKIN STARTS SLOUGHING OFF...


FEVERS, MUSCULAR ATROPHY, COMA AND FINALLY DEATH. PATIENTS RARELY MAKE IT PAST THE AGE OF TEN.


MOTHER'S RICH. MAYBE BEN IS PLANNING TO TRY AND BILK HER. COULD BE HE--

KLICK-ICK!
UH-OH.

BUDDA
BUDDA
BUDDA
BUDDA
BUDDA
BUDDA
BUDDA
BUDDA
BUDDA
BUDDA
YEAH. THIS DAY'S GOING REAL WELL.
BUDDA
BUDDA
TO BE CONTINUED!

NEXT:

LET US KNOW HOW WE'RE DOING! DROP US A LINE AT SPIDEYOFFICE@MARVEL.COM!
BE SURE TO MARK IT OKAY TO PRINT!

ZONE